

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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R 281040Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2001

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 2332

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT MO

SUBJ: KING HASSAN SEES UNFP LEADER

1. SUMMARY. UNFP LEADER DESCRIBES RECENT TRIP TO PARIS, CALL ON KING, CONCERN WITH ALGERIA, AND CURRENT UNEASY SITUATION IN MOROCCO. KING MAKING GESTURES TOWARD OPPOSITION, BUT NO MAJOR CONCRETE ACTION EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MAY 24 UNFP LEADER DESCRIBED RECENT SERIES CONTACTS INCLUDING CALL IN LATE APRIL BY CHIEF OF ROYAL CABINET, WHO ASKED HIM TO PROCEED PARIS TO TELL UNFP EXILES ON BEHALF KING THEY COULD RETURN TO MOROCCO SAFELY; TELEPHONE CALL ON KING; AND FORMAL AUDIENCE WITH KING MAY 20.

3. UNFP SAID THAT BOTH PRIOR AND AFTER TEN-DAY VISIT TO PARIS (WHICH TOOK PLACE LATE APRIL AND EARLY MAY) HE MADE CLEAR TO PALACE INTERLOCUTORS THAT UNFP EXILES WOULD NOT RETURN TO MOROCCO UNLESS THEY COULD LIVE IN FRAMEWORK OF POLITICAL FREEDOM AND LEGAL SECURITY, AND THAT BASIC CONDITION WOULD BE PRIOR RELEASE OF ALL COLLEAGUES CURRENTLY IN PRISON. HE SAID HE MADE THIS
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POINT IN PARTICULAR TO KING WHEN LATTER TELEPHONE HIM PERSONALLY

TO SAY HE WILLING HAVE EXILES' DOSSIERS NOT ONLY REMOVED FROM FILES BUT DESTROYED.

4. MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENT CAME MAY 20 WHEN GENERAL MOULAY HAFID, HEAD OF ROYAL HOUSEHOLD, TELEPHONED AND ASKED HIM SEE KING LATER SAME DAY. DURING COURSE SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE FORMAL AUDIENCE (FIRST TIME HE HAD SEEN KING SINCE CALL JAN 5), KING DECLARED HE NOT SATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT HE NAMED APRIL 25; SAID HE PLANNED HOLD ELECTIONS THIS FALL (AFTER HARVEST) OR IN EARLY 1975; AND REPEATED HIS WILLINGNESS HAVE UNFP EXILES RETURN HOME. UNFP LEADER REPEATED PREVIOUS ARGUMENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR NEED TO RELEASE THIRTY-FIVE PERSONS HELD KENITRA PRISON, INCLUDING OMAR BENJELLOUN, WHO WAS TO HAVE BEEN RELEASED LAST AUGUST 30. TOLD KING HE HAD SEEN FILES AND THAT CHARGES AGAINST THOSE HELD (PLOTING TO ESCAPE PRISON AND OVERTHROW REGIME) HAD NO BASIS IN FACT. KING LISTENED BUT MADE NO COMMITMENTS, AND DURING COURSE CONVERSATION WENT ON TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE FORMATION TRANSITION GOVERNMENT TO PREPARE ELECTIONS, OR FORMATION GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD PREPARE PROGRAM TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING NEW LEGISLATURE. (IN REPLY QUESTION, UNFP LEADER TOLD EMBOFF THAT KEY ROLE IN SUCH A GOVERNMENT CLEARLY WOULD BE PLAYED BY PRIME MINISTER.)

5. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED UNFP LEADER WHETHER HE HAD SEEN UNFP EXILE LEADER MOHAMED EL BASRI WHILE IN PARIS, HE SAID THAT BASRI IS CURRENTLY IN ALGIERS, BUT ADDED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE SEEN BASRI UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED BASRI AT LENGTH WITH KING AND WARNED HIM THAT BASRI NOW LIVING IN OFFICIAL RESIDENCE PROVIDED FOR HIM BY ALGERIANS. IT IS CLEAR, HE TOLD KING, THAT BASRI IS NOT ONLY BEING FIANCED BY LIBYANS BUT IS ALSO BEING HELPED BY ALGERIANS. KING, HE SAID, OBVIOUSLY AND WITH REASON, IS WORRYING ABOUT ROLE OF ALGERIANS. UNFP LEADER SAID HE HIMSELF CAN UNDERSTAND WHY BASRI FEELS AS HE DOES ABOUT KING AND REGIME, BUT HE DOES NOT WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM NOW OR IN NEAR FUTURE.

6. UNFP LEADER DESCRIBED KING AS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION IN MOROCCO, AND IN PARTICULAR WITH MILITARY. HE CITED KING'S RECENT CANCELLATION OF TRIP TO SOUTH AND CANCELLATION OF MILITARY PARADE ON MAY 14 AS SYMPTOMS OF KING'S UNEASINESS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND SAID APPOINTMENT OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER LARAKI AS FOREIGN MINISTER HAS ANGERED MILITARY (WHO REMEMBER LARAKI AS SPITTING AT AND SLAPPING SKHIRAT MILITARY PLOTTERS BEFORE THEIR EXECUTION). HE SPECULATED THAT KING'S CURRENT MOVE TOWARD OPPOSITION MAY BE RESULT OF NOT WANTING TO HAVE BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION AGAINST HIM AT SAME TIME. IN ANSWER QUESTION, HE SAID HE HAS NOT HAD CONTACTS WITH MILITARY.

7. COMMENT: IN DISCUSSING KING'S OVERTURES. UNFP LEADER EXPRESSED NO REAL CAUSE FOR HOPE THAT ANYTHING VERY CONCRETE WOULD EMERGE. HE SAID THAT AS DURING 1971-1972 POST-SKHIRAT PALACE-OPPOSITION NEGOTIATIONS HE IS ALWAYS WILLING TO LISTEN TO PROPOSALS, BUT IT REMAINS AS UNLIKELY AS EVER THAT KING WOULD REALLY BE WILLING TO SHARE POWER IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY. HIS YOUNGER UNFP COLLEAGUES, HE SAID, NOW FEEL MORE THAN EVER THAT UNFP SHOULD NOT SELL OUT TO PALACE AND TRY TO SAVE "WORM-EATEN REGIME." HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED HIS CALL ON KING WITH HIS ISTIQLALI COLLEAGUES IN NOW MORIBUND NATIONAL FRONT. DESPITE KING'S OFFER TO HAVE UNFP EXILES RETURN HOME, MOREOVER, THE SEALS ON DOORS AT UNFP HEADQUARTERS STILL HAVE NOT BEEN REMOVED BY POLICE.
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